CBSK

NEWS DIGEST

OF THE I.A.R.F.

IACOBUS ARMINIUS OVDEWATERÆ NATUS A°. 1560.
Obiit Lugduni Batavorum. Vixit Annos 49.

Si pietas, si docta manus, calamique labores
Orbi manent Miracula,
Cernite terrorem erroris, pietatis amorem,
Magnum videte Arminium.

Zoo 't houtsch gemoet, de Wysheyt, en Geleertheyt
Geen Voetsters zyn van dwalingh, en verkeertheyt.
Zoo zie dit beelt, een bie wy van fenyn,
Wie 't Vonnis volt die oordeel van Arminyn.

Iacobus Arminius binnen Oudewater geboren A° 1560.
te Leyden overleden out zynde 49 Iaren.

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FOR LIBERAL CHRISTIANITY AND RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

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NEW ADDRESS OF THE SECRETARIAT:

The Secretariat moved to new apartments on February 1st. Please note the new address in all the correspondence to the IARF:

40 Laan Copes van Cattenburch, The Hague.

JACOBUS ARMINIUS

G. J. Hoenderdaal, Professor of Theology at Leyden University on behalf of the Remonstrant Brotherhood, wrote the following article, which was taken over, slightly abridged, from the Remonstrant weekly.

On October 10th, 1560, Jacobus Arminius was born at Oudewater, a small town in the west of Holland. This birthday anniversary will be solemnly commemorated by the spiritual descendants of Arminius, united in the small undogmatic Remonstrant Brotherhood. Meetings will be held, in which the significance of Arminius and his theology will be the main theme. By means of these meetings, the Council of the Remonstrant Brotherhood hopes that not only in Holland, but also abroad, interest will be aroused for these assemblies; for the influence of Arminius reaches further than merely Holland and is clearly apparent, especially in England and the U.S.A. Therefore 1960 is our "Arminius Year".

Arminius is, if not the founder of the Remonstrant Brotherhood, the man whose theology was the origin of our existence as a religious community. We have never wanted to call ourselves Arminians. Abroad, this term is familiar. There, Arminian often denotes all Protestant theology which is not Calvinistic nor Lutheran. So there are Arminians among the Anglicans, the Methodists and the Baptists. The Remonstrants, however, have never borne this name.

Was it a case of avoiding personal glorification? Or was one aware that the Brotherhood had, in fact, more spiritual ancestors than Arminius alone, that these built on the first reformers in the Netherlands, and that a man such as Anastasius Veluanus, and the so-called National Reformed, also exercised influence on the theology and spirit of the Remonstrants?

Nevertheless, it is in the first place Arminius, whose manner of thinking has decisively influenced the spirit of the Remonstrants.

As far as I can judge this thought is less determined by humanism than indeed by the Reformation. Arminius has not studied in Geneva and received praise from such men as Gryneus and Beza, without this having some effect. The reformed element is more strongly nourished through close contact with the Bible by Arminius, than by most of his contemporaries. Not that the Calvinists were not Bible minded! But they allowed themselves to be more quickly carried away to speculations which were rather of a scholastic character than purely biblical. Arminius' aversion to bare speculation comes again and again to the fore. In his inaugural address at Leyden in 1603, he says, "Only practical theology exists, a theoretical theology can never exist on earth, this belongs to heaven, where we will behold God himself". At the present time we would say: we can not speak about God as if we had looked in heaven. Therefore our theology is practical, that is to say, it does not lose itself in speculative contemplation over the nature of God, but it recognizes God through His revelation and through the functioning of faith in our lives.

Theology is practical, which is to say that it consists not of pure knowledge, but is connected with faith and life. We are not concerned with finding evidence of God's existence along logical lines. No one can think about God then, unless he is enlightened by God's own spirit. This contemplation over God and the things which he has revealed to us, does not then lead to a cold science as an end in itself. No, every theology must lead to the worship of God, says Arminius.

The centre of Arminius' theology is to be found in the belief in Jesus Christ. In the first place this theology is Christo-centric. "If one theologizes beyond the revelation in Christ", so he writes in his inaugural address at Leyden, "one gets a theology which is based on the law of the Old Testament, but the real Christian theology starts only with the recognition of God in Christ". Although Arminius still puts most strongly Christ's mediatorship in the old scholastic forms, and especially the expiatory sacrifice-salvation by means of the blood of Christ, more to the fore than we in our modern manner of thinking of Christ would like to do, the fact remains that Christ was the centre of his thinking; this we must bear in mind when considering his entire theology, which has its roots in this belief. This is of great importance also to us. The point of the predestination must also be seen in this light.

The conflict between Gomarus and Arminius was over the doctrine of predestination. This doctrine as such has never been disputed by Arminius. He was too much convinced of the sovereign freedom of God to be able to deny that God would not have the right to completely influence His creatures. He denied, however, that God disposed by means of blind fate or that He would have destined

beforehand who would enter into salvation or who into damnation, and all this regardless of faith. No, he says in the 15th disputation, which gave rise to the contention with Gomarus: predestination is the decision of the free pleasure of God in Christ, by which He resolved to justify, to receive and to give eternal life to the honour of His glorious grace, to them He had granted the gift of faith.

Arminius was not concerned with proving that man can attain salvation of his own free will. Everything remains the mercy of God. He only argues in the eleventh disputation that man originally, as created by God, possessed free will, but this has been lost through the fall of man, so that man is now the slave of his own sin. Only through redemption in Christ does man regain his freedom.

Do you consider that these are unfruitful speculations, do you say that your present day faith has little to do with this? If this is the case then I have presented the matter too superficially. After all, the background of all this is, that Arminius, speaking and thinking through a living faith, will not restrict the glory of God, but will ascribe to Him all love and mercy whereby we live, so that he will not make the relationship between God and man mechanical, will not confine it within a plan of thought, that he will retain the organical connection, that he deems the love of God so great, that coming from God, man is allowed to take a living part in the relationship between God and man and not be a marionette in the predetermined hands of God. All this is so strongly prompted by a warm and biblical faith, that it can appear true to life for us too.

Arminius must have been an ardent believer and an intensely living man. Even Baudartius, one of Arminius' opponents, had to admit as much. "Arminius — (he wrote) — was polite, friendly, easy to talk to, very entertaining and therefore beloved by adults and children alike. If weighty problems were talked about, he joined in the discussion, if someone was in a gay mood, he entered into the same spirit. He was musical too and ready to take part in musical gatherings. When entertaining friends, he was hospitable and generous. He was not averse to reciprocating such invitations and make good cheer, in honour and decency. But he was not sound in the faith with regard to the doctrine of the predestination and the appurtances thereof." (Rogge, Wttenbogaert, Vol. I, p. 199). Maronier, who wrote a book — which is still worth reading — about Arminius, tells us that Arminius was "a man of medium height, with dark, vivacious eyes, a clear complexion, and in his younger days with sturdy limbs. His voice was weak, yet pleasant, melodious and penetrating, particularly suitable for persuasion."

Gathered round his death bed were a few of Arminius' best friends, amongst whom his pupil Episcopius. Up until the very last his life had been filled with conflicts, which he had neither sought nor desired, but on the contrary had often tried to avoid. A peaceful death fell to the lot of this peaceloving man. Bertius, the friend who also delivered the funeral oration, writes: with his eyes turned upwards towards heaven, in the midst of the earnest prayers of all those present, he surrendered quite calmly his spirit to God, the Father, his Creator; to the Son, his Redeemer, and to the Holy Ghost, his sanctifier, whilst involuntary from the circle of bystanders resounded the words: "May my soul die the death of the righteous". Thus died the man of whom it was said that those who knew him could not value him enough, whilst those who had not valued him had never known him.

Next year we shall commemorate the year of his birth at Oudewater, were he was born, at Amsterdam, where he was a minister, and at Leyden where he was a professor. These three places were important in his life history. We hope that we shall be able to do this in a worthy way especially directing our thanks to God "out of whose grace come the origin, the continuation and the completion of all things" as it will be said later in the "Remonstrance" the document which was drafted in the spirit of Arminius.

Note:

The "Disputations of Arminius" are the lectures he gave at Leyden University in the form of theses, drawn up by himself, to which one of his students had to give an answer. Then followed a discussion. In the collected works of Arminius we find 25 of these "Disputationes Publicae", meaning those that were given at the University and 79 "Disputationes privatae" which were held in his home in smaller circles and which are of a much more concise form. After Arminius' death his collected works were published by his widow and children, with the assistance of his friend Bertius. They are all written in Latin. In the XIXth century they were translated into English. In 1956 this English translation was reprinted in Grand Rapids and edited in three volumes. This may go to show the interest of the Americans in Arminius and his theology.

PILGRIMAGE AROUND THE WORLD

Prof. Dr D. Fr. Heiler of Marburg University in Germany where he teaches Comparative Religion, gave the following report of his long stay in Asia.

Most of the modern flying trips around the world are made for pleasure, but mine was a real "pilgrimage"; I went from temple to temple, from church to church, from monastery to monastery and from shrine to shrine. Only the long distances I travelled by plane; for the shorter ones I used all kinds of vehicles: trains, buses, cars, coach-and-horses and rickshaws. In India I was often called a "Sadhu" (wandering pilgrim) though I did not wear the traditional yellow or pink robe. I watched and looked at everything without prejudice because — though I gave many addresses, mostly to universities and religious societies, christian and non-christian — the main object of my trip was to study the various eastern religions.

The beginning of my journey was symbolic: I took part in the 16th congress of IARF in 1958 in Chicago, at the same university where I had been an exchange professor some years ago. From the same pulpit of Rockefeller Memorial Chapel where I had preached on Reformation Sunday four years ago, a Muslim was now speaking. And in the same auditorium where I used to lecture on the place of woman in religion, I now gave an address in one of the sections. It was a remarkable coincidence that I finished by citing the last hymn of Rgveda, that oldest bible of humanity, with which a few days later Dr Kalidas Nag of India finished his speech to the whole of the Congress:

> "May your aims be common, a common purpose do I lay before you and worship with you, bringing common offerings. Common be your aim and your hearts united, and your mind be one so that all of us may be happy!"

The closing service in the First Unitarian Church next to the University, was to me a revelation in which I anticipated the result of my journey: the representatives of the world religions, after reading a few lines each from their own holy scriptures, lighted their candles from one large burning candle and handed on their light to the participants in the church as a symbol of the unity of all religions, and then the whole congregation drifted out into the darkness of the night, illuminating it with their candles.

From San Francisco a Japanese plane brought me to Tokyo where I attended the 9th international congress of the History of Religions, and here I gave the opening address on "History of Religions as the Way to Unity of Religions". At this congress with its marvelous organisation I came into contact with colleagues from everywhere. On the research tour which followed the congress, participants could visit the most important shintoist and buddhist shrines, under the able guidance of a Japanese. During this tour the participating scholars, though coming from the most diverse religions, became like one big family. When after a fortnight's travelling together, most of the participants returned to their own countries, I stayed on for another three months in Japan and during this stay learned to love the country as well as its people. In a Zen-Buddhist monastery I was taught the technics of its meditations and studied their rich religious life. I visited many buddhist temples and monasteries, among them the place where the ashes of the famous buddhist reformation prophet Nichiren are kept, and the holy mountain city of Koyasan with its enormous necropolis. Of special interest to me were the buddhist nunneries whose abbesses and novices made a deep impression.

From Japan I continued to Formosa and from there to Hongkong, where I saw Chinese buddhist monasteries and nunneries. In Shatin near Hongkong I spent some time in a Christian study centre for Chinese religion. Twice I came right up to the red-China border. My next stop was at Tai Ninh in South Vietnam, centre of the great buddhist reform-sect Cao Dai, which is only 30 years old and which endeavours to be a synthesis of Confucianism, Buddhism and Christianity. The greatest impression was made on me by the gigantic, wonderful temples Angkor Vat and Angkor Thom in Cambodja. After this I went to Indonesia and saw the famous Borobudur in Java. The following place of interest was Bangkok in Thailand with its many, many buddhist temples, where for the first time I met the Theravada- or Hinayana-Buddhists. Then came Rangoon with its "golden" giant temple Shvedagon.

At last I reached the country, which some of my friends call my "spiritual" fatherland, India. I immediately fell ill in Calcutta, and had to stay for 4 weeks. Then I went by plane to Kathmandu in

Nepal, a country which ten years ago was still closed to all Europeans. But just on account of this, the people and their religious life have kept closer to their origin than elsewhere and I have come to like this kindly people very much indeed. — After leaving here I visited Patna and the holy city on the Ganges: Benares. From here I managed (though with many difficulties), to reach the four holy places from which Buddha in his dying hour had said that they would become the places to which his disciples would come as pilgrims. These shrines are at Lumbini (today part of Nepal) where the Buddha was born, the place of enlightenment Bodhgaya, the place of his first sermon in Sarnath and the place where he went in to Nirwana, Kusinàgara and also the ruins of the buddhist university Nalanda. From New Delhi I visited Agra, Muttra and Brindaban, of which the two last mentioned are the scene of the Krishna-myth, then on to Hardwar and Rishikesh, where live many Hindu ascetics, Khalsi, where the edicts of King Ashoka are carved in stone, Amritsar with its "golden temple", which is the centre of the hindu-islamic mixed sect of the Sikh, from where I went to the centre of Jainism on Mount Abu and on to Bombay, centre of the Parsis who are followers of Zarathustra. Then my way brought me to Madras and the places where the apostle Thomas is said to have worked and died as a martyr, to Ceylon, the high shrine of Theravada-buddhism, back to the south of India to the centres of the SouthIndian Thomaschristians (Kottayam and Ernakulam) and to the hindu giant temple of Madurai. My last lecture was to 200 Christian missionaries in the SouthIndian mountain resort Kodaikanal and my theme was: Sadhu Sundar Singh and the problem of the Christian Mission in India.

The main result of my journey was that I came to acknowledge the spiritual and religious unity of all mankind. I was often reminded of the German poet's word: "Menschen sind die Menschenkinder aller Zeiten, aller Zonen" (Men are the children of Man in all times and all places). Everywhere I had access to the hearts of believers of all faiths: Hindu, Jaina, Buddhists of various trends, Muslim, Sikh and Parsis. In all faiths I found deeply religious people. Also the non-Christians pray with abandon and fervour as do Christians. With regard to this devotion of prayer I could only repeat Tertullian's words: "O testimonium animae naturaliter christianie". And all men pray to the *one* God — I never found a single polytheist, neither amongst Hindus nor amongst Buddhists or Shintoists. When I asked Hindus if they belonged to a Vishnu- or Shiva-sect they replied: "There is only one God". But they added: "There are many ways to Him, just as there are many stairs down to the water". One must not believe that the Eastern religions are dying out, notwithstanding all

secularizing tendencies of Western technics. When a European theologian during his stay in Japan said: "Buddhism is dead", he cannot have seen the thousands of pilgrims who daily wander to the famous shrines, and many other instances of faith. On the contrary, the Eastern religions are going through a reformation as an opposition to the Christian Mission of which they have learned so much. All the time new religious sects are detaching themselves from the old faiths, especially in Japan, so e.g. the very vital Rissokosheiku, which might be called a kind of Buddhist Oxford Movement. In such movements there is usually a great openness towards the New Testament Gospel, especially towards the person of Jesus. When I admired an Indian Professor of History for his extensive knowledge of the Bible, he said: "Well, I am a disciple of Jesus, but at the same time a disciple of Krishna". This answer is characteristic of many educated Asiatics. They are familiar with the problems of "Leben-Jesu-Forschung" (the Research of the life of Jesus) and they feel drawn to Jesus and his Gospel, especially the Gospel of St. John, but they cannot and do not want to be unfaithful to the great traditions of their own country.

It is here that we find the whole tragedy of the Christian Mission. It has accomplished great things, in the field of education, medicine and social security, but in its own specific field, in the conversion of the Asiatics to Christianity, it has also done much damage. The Mission has tried to bring to the Asiatics the European kind of Christianity. In the Missionary stations of the various denominations, I found the same religious practices, prayers, songs and melodies which I knew from Europe and U.S.A., often even in European languages (Latin or English); everything there, is just as in Rome, Canterbury, Moscow and New York. Very seldom did I find churches which were built in the style of the Eastern peoples for whom they were destined, not to speak of the theology which is pure Western import, be it Roman scholastics, Lutheran dogmatics or Barthian dialectics. The Christian missions are for the greater part the product of a spiritual colonialism, which has developed side by side with political and economic colonialism. "Christianity means westernization" said a Japanese priest of the Anglican Church. However, many missionaries, especially those of the Roman Catholic and Anglican churches have realised this problem and are seeking for an oriental form of Christianity, which according to the words of a Jesuit missionary "has not yet been found". He added, "We want to pull down the Latin wall". But many Easterners through the centuries of "Europeanism" have been spoiled to such a degree that they no longer want oriental forms and carefully try to avoid everything that would remind them of their national religious traditions. Mis-

sions have estranged oriental Christians from their spiritual origins to a great extent, especially from their wonderful litterature. I have met a very well educated Chinese lady-teacher, member of the Anglican Church, who had never read Laotse's Tau-te-tsjing, China's most marvellous philosophic work, which is known and loved by many Western Christians. Dialectic theology which is also widely spread in the East, has done much to further this estrangement. Protestant missionaries, and also oriental Christians born in the East, have been eager to absorb this theology, in the belief that it would give them a weapon with which to overcome the non-Christian religions all the more quickly. It is no wonder that after the crashing of colonialism, and in connection with the rise of national movements in the East, the opposition against Western Missions has become stronger and stronger; from China they have been totally driven away; but also the Indian Government, which has proclaimed full religious tolerance, only very seldom allows a visa to Western missionaries, and even the most zealous Indian Christians wish for the total disappearance of Western missionaries. All the same I see Western Missions in these countries as a necessity, and that in two respects: first as social and medical mission, like that of Albert Schweitzer in Africa, but secondly also for the free exchange of religious experiences and insights — both of course without any tendency to proselytizing in the sense of an increase in the statistics of baptism. In this respect I believe I myself also exercised a Christian missionary practice. A lady who read my travelogues expressed it very aptly when she said: "A man goes to foreign peoples who have quite another way of thinking, not in order to bring them his faith, but in order to perceive in them fellow-men, whom he wants to understand in their way of thinking and believing, and he meets men who expect the same from him. Through this will to get together one does the best kind of missionary work because it happens unintentionally."

Among the many objects I collected during my travels for the religious-historical collection in the Marburg Castle, there is a cast of the Tolerance edict of King Ashoka, from which I — like the vice-president of India, Mr Radhakrishnan — always like to quote as a warning for Western Christians who are always apt to think of themselves as having the absolute Truth: "Whosoever glorifies his own religion and condemns the religion of others, on account of his being drawn to his own religion and in order to glorify his own belief, only injures his own religion all the more. Unity alone becomes man, that is to say, it is right that he hears the other man and hears him gladly".

Friedrich Heiler

ROBERT B. TAPP

UNIVERSALIST-UNITARIAN MERGER

(Robert B. Tapp, Professor of Theology in the Universalist Theological School of St. Lawrence University, New York, describes the merger which has taken place between the Universalists and Unitarians in the U.S.A.)

At a joint meeting in Syracuse, New York, on October 31, 1959, delegates of the American Unitarian Association and the Universalist Church of America approved a definitive plan for merging the two denominations by votes of 518 to 43 and 238 to 33, respectively. For legal reasons, this is a "consolidation" but functionally it will mean complete organic merger under the name of The Unitarian Universalist Association.

While further steps must still be taken to complete the plan, this may be considered as the decisive vote which climaxes decades of discussion between Universalists and Unitarians. Outsiders may have long-since come to feel that the two bodies were "indistinguishable", but the usual quota of human and bureaucratic problems plagued the delegates.

The actual negative vote was smaller than almost anyone could have predicted, in view of the sharpness of previous opposition. Some Universalists were fearful that their smaller, less wealthy structure would be swallowed. Some Unitarians had argued that their present momentum of expansion would be hindered. Both groups wanted to preserve their historic names. The more conservative members of both feared the loss of theistic and Christian emphases (even though few were disposed to argue that the inter-denominational differences were greater than the intra-denominational ones).

Several factors combined to account for the attrition of opposition. The two denominations are similarly organised, being congregational in polity and non-creedal in theology (as against the differ-

ences between the Congregational and Evangelical and Reformed bodies which merged into the United Church of Christ). Universalists and Unitarians have become quite similar in matters of belief and social values (as against the Methodist bodies which united in 1939). In spite of the lack of any massive obstacles, however, this process of merger has been painstakingly slow.

A joint hymnal was produced in 1937. In 1953 a new corporation, The Council of Liberal Churches, was created to symbolise and extend previous joint ventures in education and to act as a "holding company" for pooling other services. By 1955, it had become apparent that further steps in this direction were neither economically nor practically possible. Faced with the alternative of this status quo, a reversion to separate efforts, or immediate steps toward full merger, the two groups chose merger. A Joint Merger Commission prepared detailed study manuals and conducted a plebiscite of churches early this year on a proposed plan. Approximately 75 per cent. of the voting churches and individuals approved.

This week at Syracuse, delegates amended a new version of this plan and finally approved a common Constitution and By-Laws in separate business sessions. This now goes to member churches in a second plebiscite which must be completed by March, 1960. If 60 per cent. of the churches in each denomination participate and 70 per cent. of those assent, concurrent sessions to be held in Boston in May will give final ratification and create interim commissions to effect the consolidation within the next calendar year. On the basis of the earlier plebiscite and the Syracuse vote, this outcome now seems to be assured.

Probably no event in ecclesiastical history has so scrupulously observed the democratic processes or used as much counsel in the techniques of "group dynamics". The latter has almost, in fact, become a term of momentary approbium among Unitarians and Universalists. The former can better be understood by an examination of the Syracuse agenda. The plan was formally presented at a joint session, discussed in small denominational groups, discussed again in small joint groups, then debated in a joint evening session so large that it had to be moved to the War Memorial Hall.

When this session convened, over 75 amendments had been offered and the ground rules required discussion and a straw-vote on each. The Merger Commission suggested that many of these changes could be discussed, with limited debate, under five areas of disagreement. By 10.30 p.m., however, over 30 amendments remained. A long parliamentary crisis followed, with motions to adjourn, table, suspend rules, disapprove the residue collectively, etc. Amid charges of "undemocratic", "ridiculous", "too tired",

"too hasty", reason again prevailed, delegates drew a deep breath and went through the agenda to a 1.10 a.m. adjournment. More than 500 were still in their seats to cast ballots that would clear the way for the next day's vote.

Such "steam-letting" procedures, coupled with forthright endorsements by the staff heads, Dr. Philip R. Giles, Universalist Superintendent, and Dr. Dana M. Greeley, Unitarian President, contributed to the overwhelming final endorsement. The simultaneous agreement came when the two separate groups, maintaining telephone contact, resolved three issues. Of limited interest to outsiders was the decision to hold annual national meetings and redraw the boundaries of the present Unitarian regions and Universalist state groups.

More significant was the discussion on theological purposes. The Merger Commission had included among these "to cherish and spread the universal truths taught by the great prophets and teachers of humanity in every age and tradition, immemorially, summarized in their essence as 'love to God and love to man'." A motion by some Unitarians to insert "in our Judeo-Christian heritage" after "summarized" failed by a very close vote and the Universalists, after some debate, also let it stand.

Then the Merger Commission reversed itself and recommended the insertion at the previously described straw-vote session, only to be voted down. Long huddles ensued in the next two days and finally the phrase "in *the* Judeo-Christian heritage (emphasis mine) was approved by both groups. Such manoeuvres naturally confused the working press and gave rise to choice headlines concerning the inclusion and exclusion of Jesus.

A more tempered interpretation would be that many Unitarians and Universalists now see Christianity as too narrow and exclusive a vehicle to express their piety. They have no objection, having made this point, to honouring their Judeo-Christian origins as long as these can be affirmed historically and not creedally. Both groups have long deplored the divisive role of creed-making in religion and the new Constitution specifically forbids any particular tests of beliefs for ministers (and naturally laymen).

Where this leads was well-summarized in the concluding sermon by Dr. Max A. Kapp, dean-elect of The Theological School of St. Lawrence University: "There are those whose roots are deep in Christian liberalism and those who state their liberalism in wider terms. There are those who pray and those who prefer to engage in dynamic meditation... Here we are confronted by our own profession of freedom, respect for personality and faith in the possibilities of growth".

(From The Inquirer, November 21, 1959)

UNTO THE DIGNITY OF THY NATURE

Whoever you are! you are he or she for whom the earth is solid and liquid.
You are he or she for whom the sun and the moon hang in the sky.
The divine ship sails the divine sea for you.

Walt Whitman

Live unto the dignity of thy nature, and leave it not disputable at last, whether thou hast been a man.

Sir Thomas Browne

I say whatever tastes sweet to the most perfect person, that is finally right.
I say where liberty draws not the blood out of slavery, there slavery draws the blood out of liberty
I say the human shape or face is so great, it must never be made ridiculous.

Walt Whitman

from: "Thoughts for Meditation"
edited by Jacob Trapp in the Unitarian Register.

FROM THE SECRETARIAT

Dr. Faber to inter-faith conference at Manilla (Philippines)

Dr. Faber has visited a conference of the Pax Romana movement, sponsored by UNESCO. The aim of the conference was "to discover which spiritual factors in any great religion are significant in the world today, that is, which factors have a dynamic value in the daily lives of contemporary men and women." The conference had not a polemic or syncretic character: its aim was to achieve a real understanding of the exact significance of the spiritual values in a particular religion for the adherents of that religion. Outstanding scholars belonging to the leading religions were asked to set forth the position of their own religion in relation to these questions. The purpose of dr. Faber's going was to represent the liberal point of view at this important inter-faith conference. Funds for this trip were made available by Dutch groups.
Travelling to Manilla he paid a visit to the Brahmo Samaj, Calcutta, one of the IARF membergroups. In the Philippines he came in contact with liberal groups.
Dr. Faber will report on his trip in the next issue.

Meeting of the Executive Committee of the IARF

The Executive Committee of the IARF will meet in Paris from July 27th to 31st, 1960. The Rev. G. Marchal and the secretariat will organise the meeting and bring the delegates into contact with the French membergroups. There will be a service in the famous "Oratoire". The meetings of the Executive will be held in the Church of Rev. Marchal, the "Foyer de l'Ame".

Rev. E. G. Lee: 20 years editor of "The Inquirer"

The fact that Mr. Lee edited "The Inquirer" for 20 years with so much intellectual keenness, care and religious fervour, was a golden opportunity to assure him, how much his labours have been appreciated.
The "News Digest" can only join the chorus of his friends and convey its best wishes on behalf of the International Association to Mr. and Mrs. Lee. May "The Inquirer" be led by its present Editor for many more years!

FROM THE MEMBERGROUPS

GREAT BRITAIN

Rev. ROSALIND LEE †

The Liberal Christian Movement lost a staunch and able supporter when Rev. Rosalind Lee died on November 3rd, in her 76th year. Her connection with the IARF goes back to the beginning of this century; her first visit to U.S.A. was to the IARF Congress in 1907. Subsequently she went back to study as a Hibbert scholar. At the Copenhagen conference in 1934 she was thrilled to broadcast from a Liberal Christian platform at the public meeting as a delegate from the International Union of Liberal Christian Women. In that year too, she became the secretary of the IULCW, kept it alive during World War II, and at the IARF revival congress in 1946 at Cambridge, her own university, promised the IULCW should rise again.

In 1949, having fulfilled this pledge, she resigned as secretary; owing to the onset of the crippling arthritis that ended her long and active career as minister in British Unitarian churches. Her last IARF congress was at Oxford in 1952, but she maintained her keen interest in this international work until her death.

Another side to her international work was her care for refugees. She went to Prague in 1938, and not only helped to found a children's home, but took children into her own English home and gave them a new start in life. One of her objects in doing so much to found Women's League House in London, was to make a place where Liberal Christian Women from overseas could meet and stay.

She was a President of the General Assembly of Unitarian Churches in England, after serving on the Council and many committees for years, besides taking an active part in other bodies for public welfare and education. Rosalind Lee never sought the limelight, but those who were privileged to come in contact with her

many sided interests knew of the deep spiritual faith that was the mainspring of her whole life.
It is left to us to carry on.

M. K. Garry

The International Union was represented at the Memorial Service by the secretary.

IULCW

Jubilee Conference at Westcott House, Cambridge, England, July, 1960

1960 is the Jubilee year of the International Union of Liberal Christian Women, and to celebrate it we are holding the above conference from July 9-13, 1960.
Westcott House, Jesus Lane, is a small college, built round a sheltered garden, and the accommodation is very comfortable.

Subject: Liberal Christianity as it was and will be.
Three Main lectures:

a) Liberal Christian Elements in Church History
   Dr. Jeremy Goring. M.A., Minister of Lewisham Unitarian Church.
b) Predominating Tendencies in social and spiritual life today.
   Rev. Joyce Hazelhurst. Minister of Waverley Road Unitarian Church, Birmingham.
c) The Contribution of Liberal Christianity now and in the future.
   Rev. R. Hensen, Groningen, Netherlands.

Reception at Cambridge Unitarian Church on Saturday evening.
Special Conference Service Cambridge Church, Sunday morning, conducted by Rev. Stewart Carter, Vice-President of the IARF.
Discussion Groups. Business Meeting.
Cost £ 8, including full board and gratuities.
Booking opens January 1st; apply by letter (no forms) with booking fee of 15/ to the Conference Registrar, Miss, F. Chapman, 5 Mackenzie Road, Cambridge, England.
Accommodation is limited, so early booking is wise.
Rest of fee payable on arrival.

GERMANY

Dr. Albert Schweitzer, visiting Frankfurt, was received by his friends in the rooms of the Presbyterian Church on August 29th. He spoke about his gratitude to be able to work so long in

Lambarene; humourously about the mentality of the Indigenes, then seriously about the guilt of the "Christian" Occident, the problems of today and our responsibility for the future.
The president of the German Association for liberal Christianity introduced dr. Schweitzer, mentioning his infatigable efforts for worldpeace.

CZECHOSLOVAKIA

In November 1959 the National Museum in Prague together with the Polish Academy of Science arranged an exposition of the Polish Brethren. The exposition gives a lively impression of this liberal movement in the 16th and 17th centuries.
There were big leatherbound volumes of the Bibliotheca Fratrum Polonorum, several editions of the Racowian Cathechism, the writings of Crell, Szlichtyng, Przypkowski, Stegeman and others, written in German, English and Dutch. Mention is made also of the Socinian activity in Holland and of the lively correspondence between the Polish Brethren and Hugo de Groot, the famous author of De iure belli ac pacis. His portrait is not missing. There are many interesting documents.
For the first time the Czech public could see that Unitarianism in eastern Europe is not something that was imported to Czechoslovakia from America, as is constantly said, but that it is a spiritual movement whose roots are deeply settled in the soil of Europe.

Information has reached our Secretariat that Dr. M. Kanak has become Dean of the John Hus Faculty in Prague. Prof. Kanak teaches history of religion and is well known in our Association.

SWEDEN

The "Sveriges Religiösa Reformförbund" met at Lillsved, near Stockholm, on September 5th and 6th, 1959.
The Rev. Ludvig Jönsson gave a very interesting address on "Confession and Truth" which was much appreciated by those present.
Dr. Birger Edmar's theme was: "Are we going towards Atheism or towards a religious Renewal?" The meeting agreed that the present trend was mostly characterized by a bloodless retrospective Christianity and a growing atheism. The former close relationship between church and school has become very loose and on the whole religion has become a private affair in our practical life which usually is viewed with indifference. The principle of religious freedom has deteriorated into a freedom from religion. Moreover science has taken away the strength of religion: life,

death, sin and malady are now explained in a way which eliminates all religious aspects. The biblical image of God had faded. All the same there is a difference between an irreligious and a religious atheism.

Rector Einar Odhner, president of the SRRF also gave an address entitled "The Revelation as seen from a biblical, an orthodox and a liberal standpoint". Reviewing the development of the biblical faith he came to the conclusion that Revelation is a psychic, secret experience, in the depth of the soul of prophets and authors.

Citing from writings of Luther up to modern theologians he gave a picture of the different ideas about revelation. All really sincere theological scholars recognize human elements in the Bible. Therefore it must be no more than a guess what is divine and what is human. The liberal opinion is that on the outside the bible is a purely human work. But exactly from this the Holy Scriptures derive their "wonderful" greatness. Jesus is the centre of Christianity and his life was that of a human being.

U.S.A.

The American Unitarian Association is planning to memorialise Theodore Parker during the next May-meetings. Scholars in universities are working on Parker's unpublished manuscripts. May 8th has been set aside as Theodore Parker Sunday.

Theodore Parker was born on August 24, 1810, and died in Florence, Italy, on May 10th, 1860.

During his life he was an omnivorous scholar, a keen Biblical student, and a powerful voice of freedom in a land cursed by the institution of human slavery. And for the life of Unitarians he gave a most notable contribution. When denominational officials sought to state a creedal test for membership in the church, Parker protested long and vigorously. His refusal to recognize such a test led to his virtual excommunication from Unitarian churches in New England. But some of his disciples created a new church for him where he could be heard in Boston, and from this metropolitan pulpit he preached to thousands every Sunday. And here he made it possible for Unitarians to have a church which would grow without the test of a creed. Parker's position is now universally accepted among us.

His greatest theological work was: *"A Discourse of Matters Pertaining to Religion"*, an introduction to a systematic theology. His thought influenced our great president, Abraham Lincoln; his courage supported the efforts of those who would end human slavery in the USA. A pilgrimage will probably go to Florence this year and visit the grave of Theodore Parker.

I. R. F.

Report on the I. R. F. Conference, Barnston, 1959

Most of those who attended this conference had their first opportunity to think seriously about the Study Subject for the year, "Religious Freedom and Religious Commitment", when they received copies of the Study Guide some weeks before the Conference began. Once at Barnston their views were further developed by hearing the interesting papers of Dr. Pick, whose subject was "The Essence of Religion", Dr. Dalbert on "Tradition and Religious Belief", and Dr. Freeman on "Freedom and Religious Commitment". After each paper the members of the Conference split into small groups to discuss the ideas which they had just heard and to attempt to relate them to the Study Subject itself.

As the discussions developed it became clear that there were some topics about which the Conference as a whole was agreed; and others which provoked much more controversy. It was agreed to accept the definition of religion suggested in the Study Guide: "the state of being ultimately concerned". In this state the whole personality is directed towards the ultimate ground of existence. From it alone can come the conceptions which give meaning and purpose to life. The Conference also agreed that the language of everyday life often fails to embrace the full scope of religious experience. Hence the widespread use of myth and symbol which can help to put the seeker in touch with the thing sought. There is a danger, of course, that myths and symbols will come to be invested with an authority of their own, but properly used they can give glimpses of what would otherwise be beyond understanding.

In this context there was a difference of emphasis between those who felt that a deep understanding of the past and a free use of myth and symbol of our religious heritage were of great importance; and those who felt that since each age is faced with new problems it must be quite free to work out its own solutions away from the influence of the past.

It was agreed that all laws and rules of conduct are relative, and

that unless this is recognized, it is not possible for each man to embrace every other in universal love. Hence the problem of religious commitment is one of peculiar importance to the religious liberal. Freedom should be used for some worthy end if it is not to atrophy and no purpose could be more worthy than that of religious commitment. For the liberal Christian this is an individual act and may take widely different forms, but it was the view of the conference, that the keynote to the idea of religious commitment might be found in the phrase "being creatively religious". It was emphasized that the modern tendency to equate social work with religious action was dangerous. Men who are free and devoted to liberal religion should use their freedom creatively to further the sense of brotherhood among men and of kinship with God.

There was universal interest in the question of the part which reason can play in helping the understanding of contemporary religious problems. It was commonly claimed that just as man can be treated as living at several levels, the physical, the mental and the spiritual, so the faculties which are appropriate to each level are different, and the sphere of reason is restricted by this fact.

The Conference found time, of course, for other activities than discussion both during the week of the Conference itself and during the following week when the party split into several groups which went out north, south and east into Scotland, Wales and England to make the most of a summer whose weather was mercifully as lovely as it was unusual.

Tony Wrigley

BOOKNEWS

Ds. J. G. Jacobs' "Kroniek van het Vrijzinnig Protestantisme" ed. Van Loghum Slaterus, Arnhem, 122 pp.
This booklet gives a survey of the development of Dutch Liberal Protestantism since the Reformation up till the present day. Especially the renewal of the liberal movement during and since the last war is an object of a critical analysis. Recommended for those, who are interested in the remarkable history of one of the countries, in which religious controversy has always played a great part.

Rudolf Otto "Verantwortliche Lebensgestaltung", Mettan Kinau Verlag, Lüneburg, 170 pp.
Otto was one of the masters of liberal theology in Germany, a man with a great knowledge of comparative religion (Das Heilige), of the New Testament (Reich Gottes und Menschensohn), but also of the philosophy of religion and ethics. This book contains a number of discussions on moral problems with one of his pupils, Karl Künner, who afterwards wrote down what the master had said. We get a good impression of the mind of Otto, who shows himself a good moralist and educator.

Viktor E. Frankl "From Death-Camp to Existentialism", Beacon Press, Boston, 111 pp.
One of the leading psychiatrists of Vienna tells in this book his own story about his war experiences. The book must be seen against the background of the conviction of the author, that psycho-therapy must try to get beyond the theories of Freud and must be based upon a view of man, seen as a human being, not only as a "machine" with special mechanisms. The author calls his method logo-therapy.

Prof. Dr. J. Lindeboom "Bekende Geluiden", ed. van Gorcum, Assen, 93 pp.
One of the leaders of Dutch Liberal Protestantism was Prof. Lindeboom, church-historian of the University of Groningen. He wrote an article every week in "Vrije Geluiden", the paper of the V.P.R.O., the Dutch Liberal Protestant Broadcasting Cy. After his death a number of these articles, covering all kinds of subjects of value for liberal-minded people, was published in this booklet.

Ursula Kötscher-Bark "Jesus Undogmatisch", Paul Haupt Verlag, Bern, 94 pp.
In the liberal movement the difference is always felt between the stories in the Gospels and the later dogmas of the Church. This is a sympathetic endeavour to reconstruct the inner life of Jesus on the basis of the data in the Gospels.

Friedrich Heiler "Die Religionen der Menschheit", Reclam Verlag, Stuttgart, 889 pp.
This book written by one of the leading experts in the field of comparative religion with the help of some able colleagues, may well become one of the classics in its field. It contains a survey of all the religions which mankind has known up to the present day, and gives a collection of information about the present situation, that has never before been brought together in this way. The book also gives more than sixty pages of booktitles. We wish this book, appearing at the appropriate moment, at a time, when a meeting of the great religions is becoming a reality, much success.

Sören Kierkegaard, "Attack upon Christianity", Beacon Press. Boston, 293 pp.
Auguste Sabatier, "Les Religions d'Autorité et la Religion de l'Esprit", Editions Berger-Levrault, Paris, 421 pp.
These are two classics from the field of European theology, which have been published. Kierkegaard is at the moment famous the world over, and his attack upon the religious attitude of his contemporaries is one of the most striking features of his work. Sabatier was one of the leading liberal theologians in France, round 1900. Georges Marchal, who plays an important part in the liberal movement in France today, wrote a preface for this edition, in which the author gives an insight into his fundamental positions.

David B. Parke, "The Epic of Unitarianism", Starr King Press, Boston, 154 pp.
This is indeed, as the editor puts it, an "exciting" book about the history of Unitarian thought and in general about the development of liberal ideas of Christendom in the past. It contains a collection of original writings of people like Servetus, Castellio, David, Socinus, Locke, Lindsey, Jefferson, Martineau, Channing, Emerson, Curtis Reese, James Luther Adams and many others.
The editor provides an intelligent and clear text, which unites the various documents into a whole. It covers a period from 1531 till 1946. Recommended for those who understand that for a living movement, the knowledge of its history is necessary.

"Pendle Hill Pamphlets" Pendle Hill, Wallingford, Pennsylvania, U.S.A.
Pendle Hill is a resident centre for religious and social study

maintained by members of the Society of Friends and can be compared to the well known Selly Oak Colleges of the British Quakers. It publishes regularly pamphlets about subjects related to the "fundamental Pendle Hill idea". The aim is to publish tracts for our times, speaking on the condition of the people of our generation. Among them are treatises on "Psychoanalysis and religious Mysticism", "The Character of a Quaker", "To the Refreshing of the Children of Light", etc.

"Faith and Logic", Starr King Press. Boston, 1957, 220 pp.
This is a collection of essays, written by a small group of Oxford philosophers and theologians. They are the result of the discussions of this group, which for some years used to meet together regularly. The authors state that there is "a need for careful and sensitive examination of the bearing of contemporary philosophy upon Christian faith". By contemporary philosophy they mean in this respect Logical Positivism. The book provides interesting reading. One gets a good impression of the problems which the writers see before them and of the open mind with which they approach them.

Georg Schneider "Kernprobleme des Christentums" Ehrenfried Klotz Verlag, Stuttgart, 1959, 251 pp.
The author of this book is a former minister of one of the Lutheran churches in Germany. He started as an orthodox, but gradually became a Modernist and on account of his different convictions got into difficulties with the church-authorities. One of his problems is, that he gradually came to see Paul's Gospel in a different light from the traditional. In this book he gives an interpretation of one of the central texts in the letter to the Romans, chapter 3, 21 and following verses, in which he advocates, that Paul is liberal in his preaching and does not teach the doctrine of atonement as taught in the Christian church after him. Paul's universalism is one of the central themes of his book.

Emil Engelhardt "Mensch zwischen Welt und Gott", Verlag Horst Posern, 1953, 114 pp.
One of the German friends of our international movement gives in this little book his views on Goethe and tries to show, that his religion has actual value. For people outside Germany the parts about Schweitzer and Emerson are especially of value.

Dr. Ernst Ludwig, "Geschichte Israëls", Sammlung Göschen, Bd 231/231A
In this "History of Israël" the author gives in a concise way a very good survey of his subject. After a description of the time of the patriarchs he lets his story begin with Exodus, and continues with the developments until the destruction of the Temple in AD 70. The author quotes from the newest literature which he

uses in a critical way, especially and admirably so in his treatment of the sect of Qumran. A handy booklet with extensive registers.

Verheus, Dr. S. L., "Kroniek en Kerygma", Arnhem 1958, Thesis for a doctor's degree

In an interesting way the author has tried to achieve a theological confrontation of two historical works from the first period of the Reformation: namely the "Geschichtsbibel" of Sebastian Franck and the "Maagdenburger Centuriën" of Matthias Flacius Illyricus. By means of these two works he demonstrates the new method of writing history, which was originated by the Reformation; history is personally conditioned, it is not an organic development; history-writing is a description of Christonomy. In this Franck puts the emphasis on judgement, Flacius on atonement. The value of this work lies in its implications for the concept of the church and this gives it a timely aspect. Moreover it draws our attention to a forgotten chapter of church history.

Received for the library:

The Churches and Social Service. A Unitarian Report. Published by the General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches. London, 1959. 14 pp. 6d.

Prof. Dr. H. Dürr. Moderne Missionsprobleme (Problems of Contemporary Mission). Bern, Paul Haupt, 1958. 24 pp. Sw.Fr. 2.40.

Rev. Georges Marchal. L'Apôtre Pierre et Rome. Problème de la Papauté. (The Apostle Peter and Rome). Paris, Berger-Levrault, 1956. 43 pp.

Rev. Georges Marchal. Charles Wagner et le Problème de la Laïcité (Charles Wagner and the problem of the laiety). Paris, Berger-Levrault, 1957. 40 pp.

Arthur Peacock. Builders of the Kingdom. Story of Unitarian Social Service. Published by Union for Social Service, Social Department of The General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches, London.

Arthur Peacock. Religion can make sense. Crawley Down, Union of Modern Free Churchmen, 1958. 15 pp.

Daniel T. Niles. Wo steht unsere Predigt? (The context in which we preach). (The second annual John Knox House Lecture). Geneva, John Knox House Association, 1956. 15 pp.

A. Schweitzer. Indian Thought and its Development. Translated from the German (originally published in 1935). Second printing. Boston, The Beacon Press, 1957. 272 blz. $ 1.60.

Dr. P. Smits. Op zoek naar Nihilisme (The Search for Nihilism). (Inaugural address). Assen, van Gorcum, 1959. 32 pp.

Dr. A. de Wilde. Ons Geloof (Our Faith). Utrecht, De Ploeg, 1958. 25 pp.